

**City of Belmont  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING      JUNE 5, 2013  
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of June 5, 2013 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

**I.                    ROLL CALL**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:      Chair (CC) Wright, Vice Chair Wong, Commissioner (C) Michaels, Youth Commissioner (YC) Fox, C Bortoli, Runyan and Sullivan

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:      C Block

STAFF PRESENT:                      Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, Recreation Manager (RM) Brunson, and Secretary Saggau

**II.                    APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

CC Wright noted a correction on her comment that she also suggested focusing on one facility in the activity guide that it was one facility **in each issue** of the activity guide.

*C Bortoli moved, seconded by C Michaels, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 1, 2013 with the change.* Vote 7-0 in favor.

**III.                    PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

C Bortoli reported on the Senior Advisory Committee and upcoming activities. Sessions will be offered on Fall Prevention and Home Safety. The lunch program is progressing well and it received high marks in a recent survey. One change that will be made, at the request of the seniors, is having fruit for dessert and adding more fiber and grains to the meals.

C Runyan reported the Bike Rodeo, a collaboration of the School District, 4-H and Parks & Recreation Department, was a success. PRD Gervais thanked C Block and Runyan for attending the event. He noted approximately 100 youths participated.

PRD Gervais announced the following:

- Summer camp registration is underway.
- Rebuilding Together and Electronic Arts will be acknowledged at the June 25, 2013 City Council meeting for their work at Barrett Community Center.
- The budget will be presented to the City Council on June 11, 2013.

CC Wright reported a meeting was held at O'Donnell Park with the Homeview neighborhood group, C Wong, staff and herself and they came up with a plan for a community garden. PRD

Gervais explained that a straw waddle garden will be installed in the shape of an “H” for the Homeview neighborhood. In the fall, fruit trees will be planted at the park.

C Wong noted copies of the Belmont Village Zoning District Plan would be forwarded to the Commission for review. It is a condensed version of the plans and recommendations for the downtown area. It is still in the review process and may be brought to a Parks & Recreation Commission meeting in the future.

#### **IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

None.

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **a. Selection of a Preferred Design Alternative for the Synthetic Turf Project at the Belmont Sports Complex**

PRD Gervais explained the goal to reach consensus on the preferred design for the synthetic turf project at the Belmont Sports Complex. He reviewed the layout of the Belmont Sports Complex and location of the North and South Fields. PRD Gervais explained the reasons for the project include maintenance costs and increased demand for field space.

RM Brunson reviewed details of estimated field use by the youth sports organizations. Tables were displayed that showed the percentage of time utilized by the respective user groups, and the number of participants using the site by user group. One table identified available hours on the North Field during non-school hours and identified 71% of this time is being used. The number of players in each age group using the site and their percentages of use hours were presented on another table. He noted the winter and summer field closure periods reduce the number of available hours and playable hours.

PRD Gervais stated other reasons for this synthetic turf project are to provide a safer playing surface, reduce the burden on natural turf fields and support health and wellness for children. Environmental considerations are reducing water use, noise and air pollution, and the use of fertilizers and herbicides.

PRD Gervais said that crumb rubber will not be recommended for the surface. Alternative infill materials that would be considered include a cork and coconut mixture, coated sand or other materials that are heat resistant and do not have contamination concerns.

PRD Gervais noted the economic benefits of this project would be the reduction of maintenance costs, elimination of repairs to irrigation system, and water costs. In addition, an improved Sports Complex may create secondary economic impacts.

PRD Gervais described the proposed project and the improvements to be made. This would include installation of synthetic turf on the North and South Fields and lighting improvements. He displayed slides showing the materials used in the installation of synthetic turf. The estimated project costs would be \$2 to \$2 ½ million for the North Field and \$800,000 for the South Field.

PRD Gervais explained the Sports Complex is an ideal site for synthetic turf because the City owns the field, it is not directly adjacent to housing, parking is not a problem, it is the only lighted field in the City and it is a dedicated sports complex.

PRD Gervais reviewed the alternatives considered and displayed photos of examples of other fields. He explained the last time this was reviewed three options – A-1, B-1 and A-2 rose to the surface. A-1 includes all synthetic turf on the entire site, A-2 includes all synthetic turf except for the mound and home-plate area and B-1 retains the natural grass and dirt infield with synthetic turf in the outfield. Soccer representatives preferred Concept Plan A-1 and baseball representatives preferred Concept Plan B-1. Concept Plan A-2 was considered a compromise option and is the preferred alternative of the Parks & Recreation Department.

RM Brunson noted he met with the baseball coach at the College of San Mateo to learn more about their synthetic turf field. He learned there have been some problems with migration of dirt into the infill but that their maintenance time has been reduced approximately 80%.

PRD Gervais said that this project was reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Commission in September 2012 and staff was asked to develop further information on field usage, attempt to reach a solution with the sports groups and come back with a recommendation. There were nine meetings with the Sports Advisory Committee but they were unable to come up with a solution. Staff's recommendation is for Design Alternative A-2 because it provides the most flexibility, serves the greatest number of residents, and reduces costs and environmental impacts.

PRD Gervais and RM Brunson responded to Commission questions.

- It is possible to fit more people on the field for soccer or lacrosse depending on the layout.
- The synthetic turf field warranties are usually 8-10 years and if properly maintained could last another 5-6 years. The cost is less than one-half to replace the synthetic turf on top.
- Field reservations are determined by the Field Use Policy. Field reservations are made at the Field Scheduling meetings. Belmont based teams and teams with a higher number of residents are given priority.
- Other locations for synthetic turf have not been identified as the Sports Complex is the only facility with lights and that is owned by the City.
- The impasse with the youth sports organizations was due to the baseball representatives wanting to keep the infield with the natural grass and dirt as it currently is. This would reduce the amount of playable space on the field.
- There had been an issue with the area around soccer goals becoming worn but with the new technology that area is made thicker so it takes longer to wear out.
- Permanent field lineage is included in the synthetic turf installation but there is flexibility with practice where cones can be used to make modifications.
- Playable hours would increase the usage by the existing user groups and there would be some flexibility for new groups or Parks & Recreation activities.
- It is expected that the geese would lose interest with this location if there is synthetic turf as they prefer natural grass.

- The costs would be recovered by the reduction in maintenance and water usage following the replacement of the synthetic turf top 10-15 years after the initial installation. Ten years of field maintenance on natural grass would cost approximately \$1.5 million.
- The down time for installation of synthetic turf would be approximately six months.
- Staff has worked with the youth sports organizations to determine if they have unused hours scheduled.
- The configuration of additional lines can be painted on a temporary basis.
- Including a track around the field could be considered.
- The line configuration could be reviewed and adjusted in design detail.
- It has not been determined if the dirt pitching mound and batting area will remain dirt or be filled in for soccer during the fall/winter season.
- Using organic materials for the turf would make it recyclable as compost. There are now some recycling efforts for the synthetic turf layer.
- Permanent lines are installed as it is difficult to maintain temporary painted lines and make them straight.
- Some water is used on the synthetic turf fields to wash off stains and to cool the fields. Also, water is used occasionally to get the turf to sit down.

Jay Anthony with Belmont Colt Baseball spoke in favor of plan B-1. He is on the Sports Advisory Committee and said that baseball proposed moving back some of the dirt area and home plate to allow for a greater turf area. He added that all three proposals save about the same amount of money on water and maintenance. He explained that allowing baseball players to play on grass and dirt would not restrict other groups from using that area. He said he spoke to the baseball coach at Carlmont High School and was told players would be at a disadvantage to play on a synthetic turf field if they want to play baseball in high school. If the grass and dirt are kept all user groups can still use that field.

Steve Kelley, coach of soccer and baseball and regional Commissioner of AYSO, expressed appreciation for this project and spoke in favor of Concept A-2 to give the most versatility to the broadest group. He noted there is a higher percentage of Belmont residents in AYSO compared to the baseball organizations. He explained that AYSO rents field space from adjacent cities in the winter because they have synthetic turf.

Steve Vega, president of Bel-Mateo Babe Ruth, explained they are a feeder program for high school baseball. He acknowledged there are non-residents in the program but they participate in their program because of the field and that playing on natural grass prepares them for the high school program. The A-2 concept would eliminate his fall program that introduces graduating Little Leaguers to Babe Ruth and gives them the experience of playing on the big diamond. He expressed concern with portable mounds and has seen injuries happen because of them. He was in favor of the B-1 design.

Tom Snider, Belmont United Soccer Club and AYSO, expressed support for Concept A-2. He noted the recent school building expansions have created a lack of playing fields. He said the Belmont Sports Complex is a City-owned field and every square foot should be made available for all users especially since the synthetic turf made today allows for different sports groups to use the same playing surface. He added that the College of San Mateo, Canada and Skyline Colleges have all installed synthetic turf baseball infields due to the maintenance cost savings.

Most colleges are considering doing away with the dirt home plate area due to the dirt migrating on the synthetic turf. At Skyline College where synthetic turf has now been placed on the home plate area and the players have had no issues fielding grounders or sliding into bases. He acknowledged that the ultimate playing surface for soccer and baseball would be natural grass but it is not practical due to the high demand and lack of athletic field space.

Ted Hornaday, president of Belmont/Redwood Shores Youth Softball, spoke in support of Concept A-2. He agreed that softball on dirt is preferable but recognizes the challenge with field space. They also like the concept of additional playing time and extended season. He added economics is not the sole reason for this project; it is for community responsibility.

Manouch Ghajar, Belmont United Soccer Club and AYSO, spoke in favor of Concept A-2 due to the growth of the soccer sports program and the potential for other sports. He noted that lighted fields are a great asset for this community and that usage will increase with synthetic turf which could increase tournaments hosted at the park. He added turf is the future and this would prepare them for college play and high schools may go to turf in the future.

Art Andrews, former Parks & Recreation Commissioner and member of the Sports Advisory Committee, stated he is not involved with any user group but he has a large interest in athletics. He spoke in favor of installing synthetic turf on the entire North and South Field. The idea of having a baseball field of natural grass eliminates the use of that field for all other sports. The new synthetic turf has been improved and is suitable for baseball. He noted the environmental benefits of having synthetic turf. New sports such as lacrosse and cricket are expected to expand. He recommended that the Commission recommend Concept A-1 or A-2 to the City Council.

Chris Zaino, Belmont United Soccer Club, expressed thanks for consideration of this project. He agreed that crumb rubber would be a bad surface because it gets very hot. He expressed support for Design A-2 as it provides maximum usage for Belmont residents. He did not expect practice time would be taken away from the baseball groups with this field design.

Jaime Dal Porto, AYSO, spoke in support of Concept A-2 due to the limited field space and the difficulty in maintaining the current field. She agreed a City-owned field should address the concerns of the majority that can use it and that a dirt infield for a small group of people would not allow the other groups to take full advantage. She added she would prefer to play soccer on grass but that is not affordable and the compromise Concept A-2 would provide the best solution.

Nicolas Dal Porto, AYSO referee, stated that turf is safer than grass because grass has gopher holes, mud pits, irrigation equipment and divots in the grass that kids could get hurt on. In addition, making calls depends on a well painted field and turf provides permanent painted on lines that do not fade. He expressed support for the A-2 plan.

In response to C Michael's question PRD Gervais said that with the B-1 concept the dirt infield could not be used for another sport. Due to its size the Marina Field does not allow for any other uses other than Little League so it was not included in the project.

C Michaels stated that looking at overall usage and flexibility and maintenance considerations he would go for one of the A concepts.

C Wong commented that it comes down to both cost and usage and the benefit of all of the community that uses the field. He recognized both sides and expects usage to go up and he expressed support for A-2.

C Runyan stated her children have participated in AYSO for many years. She noted if A-2 were selected she would like to take a look at how the lines are drawn on the field. She questioned if a synthetic turf insert at home base would stay on the table for consideration. She expressed support for A-2 as it is the best compromise for both groups.

C Bortoli spoke in support of improving the field. He noted it is the only field in Belmont with a full size diamond for baseball and the space for a U-19 soccer field. He explained baseball gets nothing out of this project as it rarely has rainouts where soccer will get more field time in August and January through March. He noted turfing allows overlaying the field and Concept B-1 would allow U12 and U10 to be overlaid over the U19 field. Turfing the entire field hurts baseball as the players would be at a disadvantage if they are not able to play on a grass infield. C Bortoli expressed concern with the safety of portable mounds and noted they are not small and would need to be stored and maintained. The fall program that would be eliminated is used to acclimate graduating Little Leaguers to the full size diamond. He reviewed the history of Belmont baseball players and the success they have achieved. He recommended the B-1 Concept with the grass infield.

C Sullivan thanked staff for the statistics but noted this shows where things are today and he would like to have had more discussion on upcoming trends for youth. He noted the schools have had an increase in enrollment and expects that population will increase demands on the sports fields. He said he would like to have had the chance to compare an alternative option besides the turf option to consider the economics of the project. He added there is a new bike bridge that goes to the Sports Complex and it would make sense to make an investment into this project. He stated that after hearing the overwhelming support for A-2 from the public that would be his recommendation.

YC Fox noted it was unfortunate that there is not more field opportunities to accommodate all the sports but noted that to best utilize the fields A-2 would make more sense.

CC Wright noted the statistics were helpful and expressed appreciation for the comments from the community. She agreed that it is unfortunate that there is not another location for baseball to play on grass but considering the usage and needs A-2 provides the most flexibility.

*C Runyan moved, seconded by C Wong, to approve plan A-2. Vote 6-1 in favor, C Bortoli opposed.*

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Consideration of Rescheduling the July Meeting and Cancellation of the September Meeting**

PRD Gervais explained due to the July meeting date landing on the night before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday the Commission may want to consider changing the meeting date to the following

Wednesday and meet on July 10. He proposed the Commission take a tour of Twin Pines Park in July. He also noted the Commission usually cancels one summer meeting and may want to consider canceling the September 4, 2013 meeting this year.

C Bortoli agreed that rescheduling the July meeting to July 10 made sense. He proposed waiting to make a decision on the September meeting at a later date.

Following discussion two motions were made.

***C Sullivan proposed, seconded by C Wong, that they move the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting one week later.*** Vote 7-0 in favor.

***C Sullivan proposed, seconded by C Runyan, that they cancel the regularly scheduled September Commission meeting.***

***C Michaels proposed an amendment to keep September but postpone it one week.***

In favor: Michaels, Fox, Bortoli & Wright

Opposed: Wong, Runyan and Sullivan

CC Wright stated they still have the option to cancel that meeting. C Runyan requested that be put on the agenda again and the Commission agreed to include on the August agenda.

## **VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **A. Questions and Comments**

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- Parks & Recreation staff met with the library staff on the Teen Program and this partnership will continue next year.
- Tree Board meeting was held prior to the Commission meeting. The City Council authorized funds for some tree work in Twin Pines and Alexander Park.
- A Request for Proposals has gone out for an on-call Arborist to assist staff with tree issues and permits.

C Bortoli noted the Tree Board is still short a member and needs another member from the Parks & Recreation Commission.

PRD Gervais reported staff will be requesting additional funds for the Landscape Architect for preparing the construction documents for Davey Glen Park.

### **B. Future Agenda Items**

Twin Pines Park Tour including Manor House  
Paper Trails  
Non-Profit Partner

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

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Jonathan Gervais  
Parks & Recreation Director